

WYCLIFFE COLLEGE

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

ANNUAL CONVOCATION

OCTOBER 9th, 1890

LECTURE

BY THE

REV. PRINCIPAL, SHERATON, D.D.

"The Church: The Household of Faith."

TORONTO

THE J. E. BRYANT COMPANY (LIMITED)

1890

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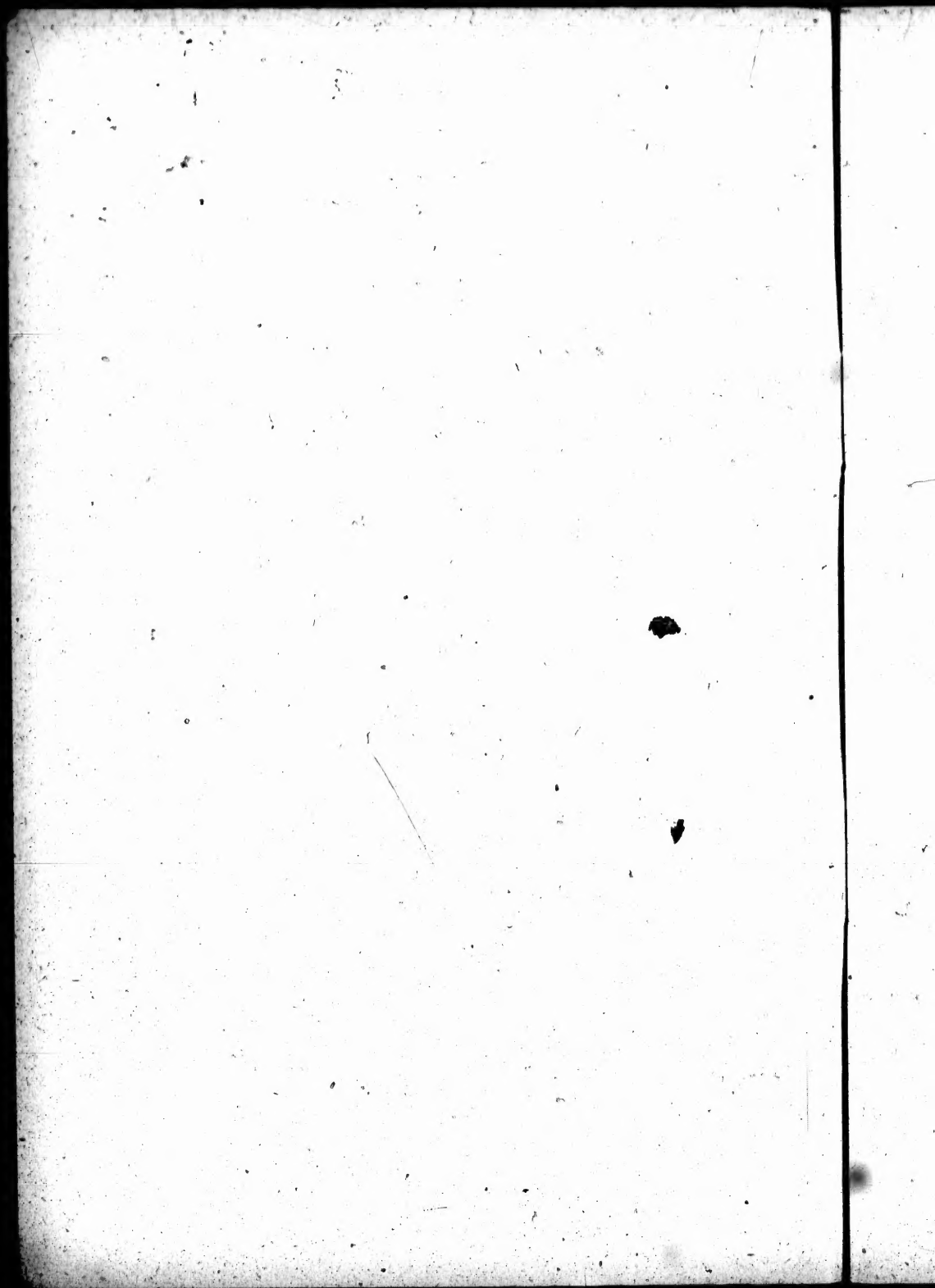
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The Church : The Household of Faith.

A LECTURE

BY THE REV. PRINCIPAL SHERATON, D.D.

*At the Annual Convocation of Wycliffe College, Thursday evening,
October 9th, 1890.*

What is the Church of Christ? This is pre-eminently a question for the times. As Robertson of Brighton once said, it underlies all the theological differences of the day. It is a fundamental question. The answer to it involves the most essential truths and vital issues in Christianity—the purpose of Christ's mission, the way of reconciliation, the methods of the Divine grace, and the nature of the kingdom which our Lord has established upon the earth. It is a crucial question; more readily than any other, it furnishes a test of theological teaching. It marks off clearly and decisively from each other the two opposing systems which contend for the mastery—the Evangelical and the Sacerdotal. It is a practical question, having a very direct bearing upon subjects which at present largely occupy the Christian mind, especially such as relate to Christian life, to Church work at home and abroad, to Christian unity and co-operation.

Whatever definitions of the Church may be given, we will find that all agree at least in this: that the Church is a religious fellowship, a society, company, or brotherhood of men, standing in certain defined relations to God, as revealed in Jesus Christ. We will also find that all definitions of the Church range themselves in two classes, according as they make the ground of this divine fellowship to lie in one or other of the two sides of the religious life of Christendom: the ethical and spiritual, or the ritual and ecclesi-

astical. * The one theory defines the Church by its outward characteristics of form and organization ; the other theory defines it by its inward characteristics : faith in Christ, and the fruits of righteousness which spring from a living faith. The former makes the existence of the Church depend upon what is external and visible, the succession of the episcopate and the sacraments. The latter theory makes the essential nature of the Church to consist in what is spiritual and ethical, in the great realities of truth, love, and righteousness, in the life of God in the hearts of Christians through the presence and power of the spirit of Jesus Christ. Whatever variety there may be in the definitions given of the Church, they are inevitably and logically reducible to these two theories : the Sacerdotal (which prevails amongst us in two forms : the Roman and the Tractarian) and the Evangelical. The Broad Church theory must either sink to the level of a barren humanitarianism, and identify the Church with the world, or continue to oscillate vaguely and indefinitely between the only two possible positive systems, according as it lays the chief emphasis upon the intellectual and ethical, or upon the institutional side of Christianity.

I will take, as the starting-point of our enquiry into the Evangelical doctrine, the simple statement of our Communion office, which describes the Catholic Church as "The blessed company of all faithful people." This definition affirms two things : that the Church is a fellowship, and that the basis of the fellowship, that which constitutes it and makes it what it is, is faith.

THE CHURCH A FELLOWSHIP.

The Church is a fellowship, not merely of men with one another, but with God. Man is made for fellowship. Without it, he cannot even exist, much less attain to perfection and to happiness. There is a solidarity of nature by virtue of which we are all members one of another ; and even this

natural kinship has its basis and origin in the higher relationship in which man at his creation stood to God. In a very high and special sense, God made man for Himself, created him His son, and placed him in a blessed fellowship with Himself. Man's present low estate originated in his alienation from God, and the loosening of those bonds of kinship on the maintenance of which man's goodness and happiness depended. But so rooted in our nature is the idea and the need of God, so strong within us is the craving after Him, and the desire for fellowship with Him, that we find everywhere men seeking after Him, if haply they might find Him. This search after God lies at the root of all the non-Biblical forms of religion; and there have been those who dimly perceived that their relationship with God was bound up with their relationship with their fellows, and felt within them the stirrings of universal kinship. It is to the honor of the Stoics that they first implicitly taught a brotherhood of men, and even of men with the gods: *Communem urbem et civitatem hominum et deorum* (Cicero de Fin. 3:19). But they recognized neither the infinite greatness and holiness of God, nor man's dependence on Him. The community they dreamed of was attained by the degradation of God, not by the elevation of men.

The Latin jurists made the Stoic doctrine the philosophical foundation of Roman law, and thus imparted to it its cosmopolitan character and its enduring value, even for us. So it was that both the philosophers of Greece and the jurists of Rome were in harmony with the prophets of Israel in their anticipation of a divine fellowship, a social state in which all men would be united under just and equal laws, and wherein the ideals of liberty and righteousness would be realized. But in Greece liberty became license, and in Rome the supremacy of righteous law was supplanted by a crushing and humiliating despotism. The ideals of sages and of legislators bore witness to man's supreme need.

of fellowship ; they had no power to attain to it. But while man is looking for God, God is looking for man. If man needs God, God also needs man, and cannot maintain indifference towards him. As Luthardt expressively says : " Man is the first and last thought of God, the resolution of His will, the beloved of His heart." It is this that distinguishes the religion of the Bible from all others. These, indeed, are the outcome of man's searching after God ; but this is the outcome of God's search after man, the marvellous quest of the Divine love which found its full expression in the mission of Him who came to seek and to save that which is lost. The Old Testament not only foretold a universal fellowship of righteousness, but showed how it was to be established. The prophets pointed to a coming One, the Messenger of the Divine will, and the manifestation of the Divine mercy, by whose work and self-sacrifice the glorious fellowship would be brought into existence.

We perceive, then, how deeply are laid the foundations of the Church of Jesus Christ ; that in its essential idea of a fellowship of men with God and with one another, it reaches back into the very *origines* of man's being, and is the fulfilment of God's design in man's creation. In its ideal and consummation, it will prove to be the satisfaction of the earnest expectation of the creation, which waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God, as well as the fulfilment of the predictions of the prophets. The Church is intended to become the realization of that fellowship for which man has been waiting through the weary ages of his travail, and which God has been planning through the ineffable ages of His eternal love and wisdom. The Church is no after-thought, no accident, no outcome of mere human wisdom or of human self-will ; but the offspring of the ages, the goal of that increasing purpose of God which runs through them all.

THE BASIS OF THE FELLOWSHIP.

But looking at the second factor in our definition, we observe that the Church is not only a fellowship, it is specifically a fellowship constituted by faith, and it could not be constituted in any other way; for a fellowship is an intimate personal relationship, a joint participation, an actual communion and friendship based upon mutual confidence and self-surrender. God gives Himself to us; and we give ourselves to God. By faith we appropriate to ourselves the love which He reveals towards us; we believe it, rest upon it, respond to it, and surrender our own love in return. Faith is not an end, but a means. Love is greater, as St. Paul says, simply because love is the fellowship itself into which faith leads, in which faith binds those who trust. There can be no fellowship without faith. Distrust destroys it. Distrust is, in its very nature, a principle of alienation and separation. When confidence is lost, business is paralyzed, the bonds of kinship are loosed, and the fabric of society is threatened with dissolution. It was unbelief which destroyed the original fellowship with his Maker in which man was placed at his creation. Faith now restores the broken unity. It makes us, as St. Paul declares, sons of God. It replaces us in a true filial relationship to our Father in heaven, and becomes the bond of unity which constitutes all believers one body, one brotherhood in Christ, "the household of the faith."

This fellowship is what is called in the Scriptures the "everlasting covenant," the expressive designation applied both in the law and the prophets to the fellowship of God with His people. For a covenant between God and man cannot have any other meaning than this, as the Prophet Jeremiah has declared, that He will be their God and they His people. On God's part, it is love which is the foundation of the fellowship; love which finds at last its chief expression in the self-giving of God in the Incarnation and

the Atonement. On man's part, the foundation of the fellowship is faith, which culminates in the self-surrender of the man to Him who loved him. It is not a covenant as between equals, in which each gives a *quid pro quo*. In this case, God gives everything, and man has but to receive. The word used to designate it implies this. It is a *diathêke*, not a *suntheke*; a gracious arrangement of God, not a bargain with man. The use of the former word to express the nature of a Divine covenant is, says Bishop Westcott, easily intelligible. "In a Divine covenant, the parties do not stand, in the remotest degree, as equal contractors. God, in His own good pleasure, makes the arrangement, which man receives." The Divine promise, says Bishop Lightfoot, is always a gift graciously bestowed, and not a pledge obtained by negotiation. As Oehler observes: "Israel's adoption to be the covenant people" is "an act of the Divine love," and "in no way dependent on man's desert." And Tennyson has given utterance to the same truth:

" For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to Thee."

All that is required on man's part is receptiveness, and faith is the organ of receptivity. "Faith," said the illustrious President Edwards, "is not the condition of receiving grace, but the receiving itself. Christ offers; believers receive." It is just because of its receptive character that faith is the suitable and effective bond of fellowship. By it man attains to greatness. Thus faith is exalted by our Lord Himself, and extolled in the Scriptures as the great creative and saving grace. Such was the source of the pre-eminence of Abraham, to whom, St. Paul asserts, the gospel was preached beforehand; that very same gospel of grace which is fully set forth in the New Testament. God established His covenant with Abraham, calling him into fellowship with Himself, so that he became the friend of God. He is the typical Israelite. The true seed of Abraham were ever

those who possessed the faith of Abraham. The law was but a temporary and parenthetical dispensation, as St. Paul describes it. Notwithstanding its externalism, which was due to its preparatory character, the Old Testament Church was constituted upon the ground of faith, not of works. The more the Israel after the flesh declined, the more manifestly the believing remnant was seen to be the true Israel. When, for example, King Ahaz, instead of trusting in Jehovah, sought the help of Assyria in an alliance which soon proved the temporal destruction of Judah, the little band of faithful men, among whom Isaiah was conspicuous, formed the real Church within the nation. The unifying principle of this fellowship was faith in God. It formed the "holy seed" which made the restoration possible; for upon it, and not upon any external institution, depended the continuity of the existence of Israel and its permanence. This was the enduring element in Judaism which passed over into Christianity. The external institutions were but the protecting envelopes, which withered away when the germs they sheltered burst into the full fruitage of their life. They were, as St. Paul describes them, "the weak and beggarly elements"; a needful discipline for the spiritual childhood of the Church, but superseded, because outgrown, when it attained to the maturity and freedom of manhood. To return to these crude, childish, and unspiritual elements is, as St. Paul tells the Galatian Ritualists, to dishonor faith, to renounce their Christian manhood, and virtually to relapse into their former heathenism.

THE TEACHING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

When it is so plain that faith was the living and constructive principle of the Jewish Church, notwithstanding the externalism of its pupilage and its seminal and preparatory imperfection, how much more manifestly so may we expect to find it in the Church of the New Testament?

We can but briefly touch upon a few salient points. Most important is the view which our Lord presents of His own mission. "I am come," He says, "that ye might have life." "The gift of God is eternal life," and this life is in His Son. Hence it follows, as St. John tells us: "He that hath the Son hath life, but he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." We are further told that the means by which men are made partakers of this life is faith. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life." Those who are thus united to Christ have, as Bishop Westcott says, "their real life solely in their connection with Christ."

And Christ's method was in accord with His purpose. He did not begin from without, but from within. He did not proceed to found an earthly kingdom, as the Jews fondly expected, and as more than once they sought to compel Him. He did not even come as a law-giver, like Moses, enacting statutes and canons. The contrast is expressly drawn between them: "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." He likened His kingdom to leaven which, working from within outwards, gradually transforms the mass. So Christ works from within by the expulsive and expansive power of a new heart, new affections, the love of God shed abroad within, and gradually possessing the whole sphere of human activities; by the impartation of a Divine life, which puts forth energies and powers and organs through which it reveals its effects and proves its existence.

Take, for example, the occasion ever memorable for the famous confession of St. Peter, and our Lord's declaration concerning the Church on the rock. Certainly it is not Peter's person, but Peter's faith, which is the fundamental matter in Christ's mind. It is to Peter as the man of faith, the typical New Testament believer, the representative of the faith which he had just confessed, that the great promise

is given. The Church is built upon the Rock of Ages, upon the person and work of the Redeemer ; and it is built up of men of faith, of those who, through faith in Him, become living stones in the Temple, members of the fellowship which is the Catholic Church. "Other foundation," declares St. Paul, "can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Observe, the foundation is Christ Himself ; not merely the doctrine about Christ, but Christ Himself in all the fulness of His Divine-human nature, in all the plenitude of His grace. We do not enter into fellowship with God simply through the Incarnation, but through the sacrifice of Christ's death. It is the crucified and risen Christ who is the foundation of the Church, the basis of the fellowship of man with God. In St. Peter's Epistle, we have the best comment on our Lord's words recorded in Matthew xvi. He makes it very plain that he regarded Christ Himself as the living stone upon which the Church is built ; and believers as those who, by means of their faith itself, are built up into the fabric of the eternal temple. So Archbishop Leighton, in his commentary on I. Peter (I. Peter ii. 4-8), says : "To be built on Christ is plainly to believe in Him." Each one comes to Him personally and individually by the faith of his heart. It is by means of this coming that each becomes united to Christ, becomes a partaker of His life, and thus a member of the fellowship of His Church. Thus Bishop McIlvaine plainly puts it : "The soul's coming to Christ is his life ; his drawing life from Christ is His union with Him ; and in that very union unto Christ is contained and involved his being built up in His true Church." So an old divine of the seventeenth century says, "This union to Christ maketh the Church to be the Church." It is the act of faith that builds us upon Christ and into the living temple, the fellowship of believers. Accordingly, Hooker declares : "That which linketh Christ to us is His mere mercy and love towards us. That which

tieth us to Him is our faith in the promised salvation revealed in His Word of Truth." And so he tells us that "Faith is the ground and glory of all the welfare of this building."

Thus the Catholic Church has no existence apart from believers. They constitute it. That which makes a man a Christian makes him a member of the Catholic Church, namely, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This basal principle of the Christian life is the basal principle of the Christian Church; so that, in its essential being, the Church of Christ is simply the fellowship of believers in Christ. Accordingly Hooker says: "That Church which is Christ's mystical body consisteth of none but only true Israelites, true sons of Abraham, true servants and saints of God." In like manner, Bishop Ridley affirms: "That Church which is Christ's body, and of which Christ is the Head, standeth only of living stones and true Christians, not only outwardly in name and title, but inwardly in heart and truth." Bishop Jeremy Taylor declares that "the mere profession of Christianity makes no man a member of Christ; nothing but a faith working by love." Again, he says: "The invisible part of the visible Church; that is, the true servants of Christ only are the Church." "So," says Bishop McIlvaine, of Ohio, "we must say of all the baptized and the communicating that, while they all have the visibility of the Church, none of them have any part in its reality except they be joined by a living faith to Christ."

THE VISIBLE AND THE INVISIBLE.

In the statements of these divines, emphasis is laid upon the difference between the profession and the reality of Christianity; the inevitable distinction between the Church in its reality, as it is seen by God, and the Church as it appears in the world; or, as it is technically described, between the Church visible and the Church invisible. This

distinction is often misunderstood, and not seldom misrepresented. But as the great German theologian, Dorner, says, it is a distinction which rests upon Biblical grounds, and is indispensable to the idea of the purity of the Church. And our own Hooker says: "For lack of diligent observing the difference between the Church mystical and visible, the oversights are neither few nor light which have been committed." In the early ages of the Church, this distinction was not sharply drawn because of the sifting power of persecution, which kept the Church comparatively pure, and caused profession to correspond more nearly with reality. But when the Church became prosperous in the world, and to be a Christian afforded worldly advantages, and masses of heathen suddenly entered into it, then the contrast between what the Church should be and what it actually was forced itself upon the earnest and thoughtful, as we find it expressed, though imperfectly, for example, by Tichonius and St. Augustine. But advancing Sacerdotalism withstood the distinction, to the increasing injury of the Church. Neander observes that Cyprian, whose name, as Bishop Lightfoot points out, marks an epoch in the development of Sacerdotalism, and his opponent Novatian, were alike involved in "the same fundamental error, that of confounding the notions of the visible and of the invisible Church." This error completely prevailed under the dominance of the hierarchical Church, but not without protest from various precursors of the Reformation, such as Wycliffe and Huss. With the Reformation first came forth distinctly into theological thought the true conception of the Church, and this distinction between the visible and invisible Church, as Dorner shows, became "an essential part of the common evangelical consciousness," and found its expression in all the confessions of the Evangelical Churches, and nowhere more definitely than in the writings of the Reformers and

divines of the Church of England, such as Tyndall, Ridley, Coverdale, Jewell, Hooker, Field, Taylor, Jackson, Usher, and numerous others.

The relation between the visible and the invisible Church thus forms an all-important factor in the definition of the Church. It is not meant that there are two Churches. There is but one Church, and to it belong the attributes both of visibility and invisibility. All the Protestant Confessions maintain that the Church has visibility, that it manifests its unseen fellowship by means of visible ordinances. And even Roman Catholic theologians, on the other hand, admit that, in one sense at least, the Church is invisible, making a distinction between dead and living members. If both, then, assert, at least to some extent, both the visibility and invisibility of the Church, wherein lies the difference between them? For a difference most vital and distinctive does exist.

The real point of difference lies in the place assigned to the two respectively in the contending systems. The Evangelical theory of the Church makes what is visible in the Church the consequent and result of the invisible, the outcome of the unseen life. The Sacerdotal theory reverses this order, and makes what is visible the antecedent and cause of what is invisible in the life of the Church. As the philosophical Roman divine, Moehler, fairly puts it in his "Symbolik": "The (Roman) Catholic teaches that the visible Church is first in the order of time, afterwards the invisible; the relation of the former to the latter being that of cause and effect. The Protestants, on the contrary, affirm that the visible Church owes its existence to the invisible, the latter being the true basis of the former."

The Sacerdotal doctrine admits, indeed, that there is, or ought to be, in the Church an inner life and spiritual realities invisible to the human eye; but it looks upon these spiritual realities as merely accidental or subsidiary, and not

at all essential to the existence of the Church, which, it asserts, depends upon what is external and visible, the succession of the episcopate and the sacraments.

The Evangelical doctrine, on the contrary, affirms that the being of the Church lies in what is invisible and spiritual, and that its visibility is the result and manifestation, and not the ground and basis, of the former. The visible Church is simply the invisible taking form. The invisible is the ideal ; it is the Church as it exists in the knowledge and plan of God, as it will be revealed in the consummation of redemption. The visible is that ideal, so far as realized on earth, as embodied in confessions of faith, in works of love and mercy, in worship and adoration, in ordinances and ministries. The invisible is related to the visible as cause to effect ; as the living spirit is to the body which it moulds and inhabits ; as faith and love and desire are to the words in which they are expressed, and to the acts to which they prompt.

But it may be asked : Ought not the visible to be the counterpart of the invisible ? Ought not the realization of the ideal to be like the ideal itself ? Truly, it ought. As the invisible is one, one life, one faith, one love, so ought the visible to make that unity manifest. As the ideal is holy and spotless and bears the image of its head, Christ, so ought its embodiment to reveal in the world the beauty of holiness, and the glory of unselfish love. It ought—that is the Divine purpose ; it will—that is our goal.

But what hinders now ? First, the Church is made up of imperfect Christians ; their knowledge is partial and their love feeble. Each individual Christian is only a very partial and defective embodiment of the ideal. The image of Christ, as reflected in His life and character, is shadowy, distorted, imperfect. Could any number of such broken and fragmentary reflections form one true and complete likeness ? Now, it is just through the lives and characters,

the fellowship and worship of Christians, that the invisible takes form, receives embodiment. And how can such a form, under such circumstances, be otherwise than imperfect, and fall far short of that to which it gives expression? Then, not only have we imperfect Christians, but we have also spurious Christians? No sooner was the Church revealed in the world than the world began to enter the Church. Among the apostles was a Judas; among the brotherhood of Jerusalem were Ananias and Sapphira. So everywhere are Christians by profession, not in reality; Christians who have the name but not the spirit of Christ. Now, must not the influx of all this worldliness, selfishness, and unbelief, into the visible Church mar its fair lineaments? The visible, then, in taking form, sustains serious loss and damage from both these causes; and, from the very nature of things, it must be but a very partial and inadequate representation and embodiment of the glorious ideal.

THE ISSUES INVOLVED.

The relative position assigned to the external and the internal in the doctrine of the Church is no mere question of words. It involves the most radical and vital issues. As we have observed, the Evangelical doctrine of the Church grows out of and depends upon the Evangelical doctrine of salvation.

The Sacerdotal system reverses the Evangelical order. The doctrine of the Church is the basis of the system; and upon it is constituted the Sacerdotal doctrine of salvation. The contrast between the two systems is accurately expressed in the well-known antithesis of Schleiermacher: "Protestantism makes the relation of the individual to the Church dependent upon his relation to Christ; (Roman) Catholicism makes the relation of the individual to Christ dependent upon his relation to the Church."

According to the Sacerdotal theory, the Church is

essentially and primarily an external and visible institution. Bellarmine maintains that it is as much so as any kingdom of this world. Moreover, it is an institution constituted by means of one special and definite form of external organization, outside of which it cannot exist, viz., a tactual succession of the Episcopate; to which the Romanist adds, the headship of the Pope as the successor of St. Peter and the vice-gerent of Christ. The Papal addition it is not necessary to discuss; it is but the logical outcome of the Sacerdotal position, shaped by the political environment of the Roman Church. The Sacerdotal principle itself is held in common by Tractarians and Roman Catholics. Both Dr. Pusey and the present Bishop of Lincoln have declared that the Sacerdotal character of the Christian Ministry is the real question now at issue in the controversies within our Church. Mr. Gore, the head of the Oxford Pusey House, defines Sacerdotalism to be "the belief in certain individuals ordained in a certain way being the exclusive instrument in the Divine Covenant of sacramental graces." Again he asserts the principle of Sacerdotalism to be "the conveyance of spiritual graces and gifts only through a specially ordained and commissioned human ministry." Haddon states that the doctrine of Apostolic Succession "means, in a few words: without Bishops, no Presbyters; without Bishops and Presbyters, no legitimate certainty of sacraments; without sacraments, no certain union with the mystical body of Christ, namely, with His Church; without this, no certain union with Christ; and without that union, no salvation."

The existence of the Church is thus made dependent upon the existence of the Ministry, and that ministry is Sacerdotal in its nature, and perpetuated by tactual succession, these being, as Mr. Gore states, the two primary principles involved in Sacerdotalism.

Three issues are here raised: Is the existence of the Ministry the precedent or consequence of the existence of the Church? Is this Ministry Sacerdotal? Is it perpetuated by means of a tactual succession? But, indeed, the second and third issues are resolvable into the first. If the essential being of the Church lies simply and solely in the faith which rests upon the Word and embraces the Person of Christ, it cannot lie in any external Ministry, whatever its character. So we are brought back again to the primary question from which we set out, viz., does the essential being of the Church lie in what is internal and spiritual: faith in Christ and its fruits; or in what is external and visible: the external organization and polity of the Church? Let us return for a moment to the New Testament. Read for example the Epistle to the Ephesians. How beautifully is the Church there portrayed in all its ideal completeness. Every trait, every characteristic, every quality named is internal and spiritual. The whole ground of its existence is Christ. Everything depends upon its relation to Him. As Ignatius wrote in his letter to the Smyrnaeans, "Wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church." It is repeatedly described (Eph. i. 23; I. Cor. xii. 12-27) as the body of Christ, the body of which Christ is the head. Each Christian is a member of the body; for strenuously as we must insist upon personal religion and personal responsibilities, yet there must be social relations and social duties. The relation which a Christian enters into with Christ is not that of a solitary individual but of a member of a community. *Unum corpus sumus in Christo*. We are one body in Christ. But what is a body? Not a mere congeries of disconnected atoms without unity or completeness. Nor is it a mere machine, which, however complex or compact in its unity of many parts, all necessary, and each having its place and function, is formed from without and regulated from without. A body is formed from

within. It is an organic unity, built up out of many and various elements, composed of many and different members, constituted and moulded by the life of which it is the product, controlled and unified by the indwelling Spirit. Such is the Church of Christ. It is not constituted by any external or mechanical process. It is a life growth, constituted and built up by the Spirit of Christ, who abides in the hearts of Christians; as Luthardt well says: "It is not external forms and customs, but the Holy Ghost which makes the Church really the Church. He is the soul that fills and animates her, and combines all her individual members into the unity of one body." "There is one body and one Spirit," St. Paul writes to the Ephesians. The body is not the external polity and organization, as some affirm, but the fellowship of believers, and the Spirit is the Holy Ghost, who, as St. Paul declares, dwells in each Christian. The life of the Church is not a thing apart from the life of its members. There is no such thing as a "corporate life" of the Church, other than the life of which every believer is a partaker.

The doctrinal teaching of the Epistles is corroborated by the actual history of the Early Church as recorded in the Acts, and subsequently traced in the basal centuries. That is a pure assumption, frequently affirmed both by Roman and Tractarian writers, that during the forty days prior to the Ascension, our Lord gave to His apostles the outlines of that external organization, in which they conceive the essential being of the Church to be placed. It is contradicted by the historical records. The apostles did not begin with the external polity. They went forth, we are told, and preached the Gospel. When those who heard believed, they by their faith itself, a faith professed and declared in baptism, were made members of the fellowship of which Christ is the living head and centre; in the expressive words of St. Luke, "They were added to the

Lord." Believers united together in worship and work, at first without any definite organization; but as the Church increased, organization became necessary, and as necessities arose, provision was made for them. Thus it was, as Lechler affirms, that "an external association arose out of the internal community of faith." To life belongs the extraordinary power we call assimilation, the power of building up organized structure out of unorganized material. It takes to itself the crude elements of its environment and fashions them into the form and glory of the manifold structures in which it reveals itself. The elements of which the external organization of the Christian Church is composed were already in existence in human society; and it was of these pre-existing elements that the various forms and varieties of Church organization were moulded. In the case of the Jewish Christian Churches, the Synagogue, itself the offspring of necessity under Providential guidance, was the mould in which the nascent organization took form. To the elements derived from this source, were added, afterwards, as the Church grew among the Gentiles, other elements drawn from the civil and social life and the municipal institutions of Greece and Rome. The whole tendency of historical research is to confirm the position of Bishop Westcott, who long since pointed out that "the Church organization which the vital force moulds, and by which it reveals itself, is mutable and fashioned out of elements earthly and transitory." Throughout the whole course of development, as Lechler observes, "the law holds good that creative power lives within, in spirit and personality, and that the external is produced and built up from within." But Sacerdotalism would reverse this law, and make the external to be the basis and source of the life, contrary to the analogy of nature, as well as the experiences of grace. In this, its fundamental and essential position, it is absolutely unsupported either by Scripture or by history.

SACERDOTALISM SUBVERTS THE GOSPEL.

But Sacerdotalism not only makes the doctrine of salvation subordinate to the doctrine of the Church, it also most seriously modifies and changes that doctrine itself. If God has irrevocably and unreservedly committed all the treasures of His grace and mercy to the Church: that is, to the Roman Church, as the Romanists say; to the Churches conceived to possess Apostolical Succession, as the Tractarians affirm; then the Church, as Dorner points out, comes to occupy the place of Christ, and we can only come into communion with Him through the Church. Consequently faith in the Church takes the place of faith in Christ, and obedience to the Church the place of obedience to Him who is the Truth. The meaning of faith itself is changed so that it no longer means trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, but assent to the dogmas of the Church. Our Eleventh Article asserts that "we are justified by faith only." Hooker, in his sermons on justification gives a grand exposition of the teaching of our Church, contrasting it with the doctrine of Rome. "Even the man which in himself is impious, full of iniquity, full of sin; him being found in Christ through faith, and having his sin in hatred through repentance; him God beholdeth with a gracious eye, putting away his sin by not imputing it, taketh quite away the punishment due thereunto, by pardoning it; and accepteth him in Jesus Christ, as perfectly righteous, as if himself had fulfilled the whole law." Hooker shows that Rome teaches that men are justified not by being accepted as righteous for Christ's sake, but by grace infused through sacraments and penances; that is, not by the righteousness of Christ but by a righteousness of their own. He calls the Roman doctrine of justification the mystery of the man of sin, and characterizes it as the great difference between the Church of Rome and the Church of England. The latter makes the ground of our forgiveness something which is altogether without us—the merits of Christ, what He hath done for us.

The former makes the ground of our forgiveness and acceptance something which is within us, a disposition or quality imparted to us. Justification is thus confounded with sanctification. To sanctify is to make righteous; to justify is, in the words of our Article, to account righteous, to reckon and deal with and treat as righteous, although we be unrighteous, simply and solely on the ground of Christ's merits in which we trust. Sanctification follows. We love Him who first loved us, and love becomes the principle of obedience which assimilates our character to that of Christ. The Church of Rome on the contrary, teaches that God first makes men righteous by a sacramental process, infusing righteousness into them, imparting spiritual qualities by physical acts. And then on the ground of what has been done *in* them, they are accepted as righteous. But, says Godet, "it is contrary to the fundamental principle of Paul's gospel to put regeneration in any degree whatsoever as the basis of reconciliation and pardon. It is to make the effect the cause and the cause the effect. According to St. Paul, God does not *declare* man righteous after having *made* Him righteous; He does not *make* Him righteous till He has first *declared* him righteous. The whole Epistle to the Romans excludes the first of these two principles, which is no other than the Judaizing principle ever throwing man back on *himself*, and goes to establish the second, the evangelical principle, which detaches man radically from himself and throws him on God." The first of these views, he adds, is that of the Church of Rome, the second is that around which the Protestant Churches have rallied. The Roman view, which Hooker so strenuously opposes, began to find entrance into the Church of England in the days of Laud. It was greatly advanced after the Restoration by the erroneous teachings of Bishop Bull, whose views were largely adopted by the non-jurors. It is essentially the view of the Tractarians and Ritualists of to-day, although

expressed in somewhat different terms, which approximate even more closely to those of Rome; so that Dr. Pusey could and did write in his "Eirenicon": "There is not one statement in the elaborate chapter on Justification in the Council of Trent, which any of us could fail of receiving." Here then is this alarming phenomenon. *Pari passu* with the growth of Sacerdotalism within our Church and as its logical concomitant, we behold the rise and development of the same radical error which Hooker brands as Rome's masterpiece. Instead of the Gospel of Grace, we have now, as in Galatia, a Gospel of works and ceremonies and externalism. It is this fact which gives such tremendous significance to the conflict with Ritualism. Thus it is that Sacerdotalism subverts the first cardinal principle of the Reformation—justification by faith only. But it equally affects the second principle—the supreme authority of God's Word. The false theory of the nature of the Church led inevitably to a false theory of the nature of Church authority. As the Sacerdotal Church usurped Christ's priestly office in regard to the forgiveness of the sinner, it also usurped Christ's prophetic office in its claims to be the sole depositary of the faith and the supreme arbiter of the truth. Gradually and consistently this error has been developed in the Church of Rome until it has reached its climax in the dogma of Papal Infallibility. Dean Goode, in his great work, has shown that Dr. Pusey and his school hold a doctrine of tradition identical with that of Rome; that they affirm Patristic tradition to be equally with the Scriptures a part of the rule of faith, and necessary on account of the obscurity and defectiveness of the Scriptures. Indeed, Dr. Pusey himself admits this in his "Eirenicon": "I fully believe that there is no difference between us (Oxford and Rome) in this. The *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus*, which our own divines have so often inculcated, contains, I believe, the self-same doctrine as laid down in the Council of Trent upon tradition."

The full discussion of these points is impossible upon the present occasion. What I want to emphasize is the nature of the issues involved in the controversy with Sacerdotalism and Ritualism, whether within or without our communion. Those who take a superficial view of it, too frequently misrepresent it as though it were a quarrel about mere matters of form and things non-essential. And it must be confessed that the opponents of Ritualism have in many cases given undue ground for this opinion, by their attitude and policy. They have followed too frequently a mere empirical method, treating the symptoms and neglecting the disease, protesting against novelties in ritual, while they tolerated the errors in teaching which the ritual symbolized. In Ritualism we have merely the symptoms of a deadly disease. It is a danger signal, and we do well to take heed to the warning. But the remedies must deal with the root and source of the evil. Sacerdotalism is a counterfeit Gospel. And as it was at the Reformation, so it is now. There is no effectual remedy except the preaching of the Gospel of the Grace of God in all its fullness and freeness. For, says Professor Wace, "in substance the work of the Reformation was to lay fast hold of the great promises of the Gospel." Or, as Luthardt expressively puts it, it was out of St. Paul's answer to the great enquiry of the conscience concerning the soul's salvation—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved"—that the Church of the Reformation was born. And in no other way can it maintain its freedom than by the believing apprehension of the same mighty truth.

It is only in the Evangelical doctrine of the Church that we can secure true liberty. The Sacerdotal theory brings the man in bondage to the priest. Submission to the Gospel sets men absolutely free from subserviency to any visible power. The first effect of Luther's proclamation of justification by faith was to shake the hoary tyrannies of Europe, and to arouse the sense of independence in men and nations.

It is a fatal error, Professor Wace points out, to think that the principles of liberty which have prevailed among the Protestant peoples during the last three centuries can stand by themselves, divorced from the great truths which the Reformation proclaimed. Only the power which originally emancipated men from bondage to the spirit of fear and superstition can conserve their liberties. Only the Christian man, in Luther's striking antithesis, is through faith free lord over all things, and through love the willing servant of all. The question of Sacerdotalism involves our liberties, civil as well as religious.

It is only in the Evangelical doctrine of the Church that we can find the true ground of the permanence of the Church. The gates of hell, said our Lord, shall not prevail against it. It is a strange and common mistake to regard an external institution as a better guarantee of endurance than a living principle. But the real ground of permanence in any institution is the principle embodied in it. The securities for the continuity and indestructibility of the Christian Church do not lie in antiquarian researches, or doubtful precedents, or the *jus divinum* of an external order; but in the truth and love revealed in the Gospel and apprehended by humble and believing hearts. As Litton well says, "Just in proportion as Protestantism, as compared with Romanism, takes the inward view of the Church, does it place the legitimate expansion of the various elements of visible Church life upon a surer and more permanent basis." And the Roman theologian Moehler makes the remarkable admission that "Christ maintains the Church in vigor by means of those who live in faith." "These, unquestionably," he says, "are the true supporters of the visible Church."

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

The Evangelical doctrine of the Church conserves its true unity. Of Sacerdotal theories, that alone of Rome is self-

consistent. As it teaches that the Church is in its essential being an external society, so it claims for itself external unity, the whole body being subject to one visible head. There is throughout the Roman Church a manifest unity of purpose and of action. But the Tractarian claims that the true Church is made up of three distinct bodies—the Anglican, the Roman, and the Eastern, overlooking the fact that the latter is, as Dean Stanley describes it, a congeries of discordant sects. Assuredly unity cannot be predicted of a visible society between whose various divisions there is not only no inter-communion, but actual antagonism. The English Articles denounce Roman dogmas as blasphemous errors. Rome formally excommunicates England. There is neither uniformity of worship, agreement in doctrine, nor connection of government between these bodies. And yet this theory holds that they and they alone constitute the one Church of the Creeds. How self-contradictory is such an assumption. But if the essential being of the Church is constituted by the relationship of believers to Christ, their Head, the nature of the unity of the Church is at once apparent. It consists in essentials, not in mere externals; in community of life, in mutual love and trust, in the co-operation of unselfish service, in likeness of character, in the all-pervading presence of the one Spirit, whose indwelling power binds all the members into one body. As Bishop Westcott forcibly puts it, "The essential bond of union is not external, but spiritual; it consists not in one organization, but in a common principle of life. Its expression lies in a personal relation to Christ, and not in any outward system."

Unity is not to be confounded with uniformity. Variety as much as unity is the law of life. Life-forms are diversified; some more simple, others more complex. The higher the life the more multiform will be the structures in which it is embodied. There will be growth in a living body, and growth means change, variety, replacement. As Westcott

says, "It is indeed impossible to regard the Church as a body, without recognizing the necessity of a constant change in its organization."

The evil of disunion does not lie in the variety of forms in which the one body is manifested ; it does not lie in the existence of differing forms of government, modes of worship, habits of thought, or methods of work ; but it lies in the jealousies and antagonisms which have shown themselves in connection with these differences. The law of distribution is a wise and beneficent provision of the Creator. He adjusts each individual life to its surroundings ; He gives to each its limits and measure, and makes each contribute to the harmony and completeness of the whole. This law of distribution is seen in its wonderful and beneficent working in every gradation of living creatures ; in the case of plants, animals, and man himself. St. Paul reminded the Athenians that God "made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth ; and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." "Made of one blood"—here is unity of life ; "determined the bounds of their habitation"—here is distribution, with all the tribal and national varieties in which the unity of humanity is manifested. This law of distribution is a most fruitful and beneficent one. The contrasts, the manifoldness, the necessities it creates, lie at the basis of all human intercourse, commerce, and civilization. But jealousy and selfishness pervert the beneficent law ; the contrasts become antagonisms ; distribution becomes division. Thence follow strife and devastation ; unnatural isolation or grasping imperiousness contending for the mastery. So in the sphere of man's spiritual activities the same law of distribution holds good. In its normal action it is most beneficent. It creates necessities, varieties, a rich manifoldness of being, in which each supplements and stimulates the others. But here again human sin and selfishness have intervened to rob

us of the blessing. Distribution has been perverted into division. Instead of "provoking one another to love and good works" there are unholy contentions, sectarian jealousies, exclusive and unscriptural pretensions, sectarianism and proselytism. While we seek to remedy these evils, we must beware lest we rather perpetuate them by confounding distribution, which is God's beneficent law, with division, which is man's unhappy perversion of it.

Division, indeed, seems to be the necessary preparation for the manifestation of true unity. As Westcott has finely expressed it, "division appears to be the preliminary of that noblest catholicity which will issue from the separate fulfilment by each part in due measure of its proper function towards the whole." Thus, as he points out, the growth of true unity is not merely in spite of, but by means of, these divisions. There must be analysis before synthesis. There must be by means of criticism, antagonism, comparison, and controversy, the elimination of each truth from error, and the definition of each, before the whole can be combined into one grand and harmonious expression. As Westcott states, "We cannot be surprised if we see around us many Christian societies, distinct and subserving in virtue of their distinctness to distinct types of thought and feeling. Differences which once were found in the same external body, are now seen embodied in separate societies. We lose something by the change, but the gain must not be neglected. We are led to the spiritual basis of unity instead of reposing in the fact of formal unity. And, more than this, the full development of each part is best secured by independent action."

As true unity is a life process, it proceeds from within outwards. It cannot be wrought out by any external process. We can tie things together, but we cannot really unite them. We can make mechanical conjunction of parts; God alone can produce a vital union. Every attempt to

anticipate God's time has ended in disaster. Mere uniformity is a method of repression and restriction destructive of thought and of that freedom which is of the very essence of religion. Instead of promoting, it has hindered unity by precluding the full and free expression of thought and conviction.

Are we then to be satisfied with the present condition of things? To use the words of an eminent Baptist clergyman, Dr. Maclaren—"Does anyone believe that the present condition of Christendom, and the relations to one another even of good Christian people in the various Churches and communions of our own and other lands, is the sort of thing Jesus Christ meant, or is anything like a fair and adequate representation of the deep essential unity which knits us all together?" Certainly, I for one, cannot think that it is. But I am also sure that no mere mechanical or ecclesiastical process can bring about this great consummation, which every earnest Christian must intensely desire. Coleridge has pointed out the difference between form as proceeding and shape as superinduced. The latter is either the death or the imprisonment of the life within. We see the deadliness of the process in the measures of external restriction and repression by which the Church of Rome maintains the appearance of unity, in which she glories. All organic form is innate. It is developed from the life within, to which it gives suitable and truthful expression. All endeavors to produce unity by external means enfeeble and dwarf the Church's life. A true external unity must be the manifestation of the spirit within, and can only be produced by spiritual agencies.

As has been well said, "It is our ignorance and our prayerlessness which keep us apart." Only as we advance in the knowledge of Christ will we come nearer to unity. Only thus shall the whole Church attain to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ by the growth of each Christian up into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God (Eph. iv. 13).

OUR DUTY.

There is one special duty incumbent upon us as members of the Church of England, that is, to maintain its Reformation position in the hearty and cordial recognition of the Reformed and Evangelical Churches. This is a matter in regard to which Evangelical Churchmen need to speak out more boldly than they have done. We must labour to secure practical co-operation with other Churches. The only really adequate and enduring expression of Christian fellowship is to be found in united action in Christian work. There is abundant room for such co-operation and pressing necessity for it at home and abroad. A policy of isolation is most injurious to ourselves. We thereby deprive ourselves of the stimulus and enrichment which result from intercommunion and fellowship with all the varieties of spiritual endowment and development, in which the fullness of the one life manifests itself. Instead of thereby depreciating our own glorious heritage, we intensify our love for it and make it more worthy of our devotion. It is altogether legitimate that we should regard our own Church organization as the most completely organized, the richest in all the elements of efficiency, and capable of most fully manifesting the energies and activities of Christian life. But it is not needful to dwell upon these things. The tendency at present in our communion is not to undervalue them, but rather to allow them to overshadow the great spiritual realities which alone give them value. And it is to these, therefore, that I now direct your earnest attention. Surely the body is more than raiment, the living Church of believers is infinitely more than any garments, however beautiful, in which any branch of the Church visible arrays itself. Love, wisdom, truth, righteousness, are infinitely greater than the ways and modes in which they may be exercised. The ultimate test of the value of different Church organizations and forms of government will be their

capacity to embody fully and adequately the rich, full life which flows from Christ, the Head ; and to carry out effectually the ends for which all Church organization exists, the bringing of the world into contact with Christ, and the discharge of all the functions of the Christian life in its beneficence and self-sacrifice.

Let us, then, use our opportunities wisely. We want deeds, not merely words. The spirit of reconciliation is one which is willing to yield much, and to suffer much, and does not stand proudly upon its rights. This is the spirit of Christ, the spirit of living unity. The want of it is the source of isolation and separation. When the tide recedes and the rocks are bare, the water stands in isolated pools ; but with the incoming tide they overflow and are lost in the full flood which enfolds them. So when spiritual life is at a low ebb, when formalism and externalism chill and weaken, the spirit of exclusiveness grows, and Christians and Christian Churches stand apart in unhappy isolation. But when the full tide of Divine life and grace enter men's hearts the barriers are swept away. The fervor of love melts and moulds and unites in Christ Jesus. It is astonishing what an effect such close co-operation will have in removing misunderstanding and promoting mutual respect and love, and we hope finally preparing the way for a closer re-union. Let us labour on, then, in hope, and meanwhile, let us not be too much discouraged by the present imperfect state of the Church. It is the time of her humiliation. It hath not yet been manifested, as St. John says, what she shall be. She is still far off from her glorious ideal. She walks in the wilderness, like the Man of Sorrows, her glory hidden and her hope deferred. But the Epiphany of her glory shall come, when united, perfect and spotless, she shall be presented faultless before the presence of her Master, whose image she shall bear, and in whose light she shall dwell forever. For that hour and that revelation of living and glorious unity let us pray and labour.

APPENDIX.

THE ENGLISH REFORMERS AND THEOLOGICIANS ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH.

The limitations of a lecture obliged me to confine citations from our Reformers and divines to a few brief references. While the space at my disposal will not permit me to present a complete catena of authorities, I have thought it well to add the following quotations from some of our leading theologians :

"Holy Church is the congregation of just men, for whom Christ shed His blood."—*Wycliffe*.

Says Lechler : "According to Wiclif, the eternal ground or basis of the Church lies in this Divine election. He always defines the Church to be the communion or whole body of the elect. He places himself in deliberate opposition to the idea of the Church which prevailed in his time . . . according to which men took the Church to mean the *visible* Catholic Church."—*Lechler's John Wiclif, vol. ii., p. 98.*

"The Church is both visible and invisible. 'The invisible Church is of the elect of God only; the visible consists both of good and bad. . . . I deny that succession of bishops is an infallible point to know the Church by.'—*Philpot*.

"Such as teach the people to know the Church by these signs, namely, the traditions of men and the succession of bishops, teach wrong."—*Bishop Hooper*.

"The Church is the body of the Christian commonwealth ; that is, the universal number and fellowship of all the faithful, whom God, through Christ, hath, before all beginning of time, appointed to everlasting life. . . . Here in the Creed is properly entreated of the congregation of those whom God, by His secret election, hath adopted to Himself through Christ ; which Church can neither be seen

with eyes, nor can continually be known by signs. Yet there is a Church of God visible, or that may be seen. . . . The visible Church is nothing else but a certain multitude of men, which, in what place soever they be, do profess the doctrine of Christ, pure and sincere; . . . and, moreover, do use His mysteries, commonly called sacraments, with the same pureness and simplicity (as touching this substance) which the apostles of Christ used and have put in writing."

—*Dean Nowell's Catechism.*

"I confess that in a Church collected together in one place, and at liberty, government is necessary in the second kind of necessity"; that is, as he has already explained, not "that without which a thing cannot be," but "*that without the which it cannot so well and conveniently be*"; but that any one kind of government is so necessary that, without it, the Church cannot be saved, or that it may not be altered into some other kind, thought to be mote expedient, I utterly deny; and the reasons that move me so to do be these: The first is, because *I find no one certain and perfect kind of government prescribed or commanded in the Scriptures* to the Church of Christ; which, no doubt, should have been done if it had been a matter necessary unto the salvation of the Church. Secondly, because the essential notes of the Church be these only: the true preaching of the Word of God, and the right administration of the sacraments; for, as Master Calvin saith, 'Wheresoever we see the Word of God truly preached, and God, according to the same, truly worshipped, and the sacraments, without superstition, administered, there we may, without all controversy, conclude the Church of God to be.' The same is the opinion of the godly and learned writers, and the judgment of the Reformed Churches, as appeareth from their confessions; so that, notwithstanding, government, or some kind of government, may be a part of the Church, touching the outward form and perfection of it, yet is it not such a part of the essence

and being but that it may be the Church of Christ without this or that kind of government ; and, therefore, the 'kind of government' of the Church is not 'necessary to salvation.'"—*Archbishop Whitgift, Works, vol. I., p. 184 sq., Parker Soc. Ed.*

Field, Dean of Gloucester, insists on the distinction between the Church visible and invisible, making the former to consist of those called by the grace of God into the knowledge of the Gospel, and the latter of those who, by outward profession, belong to the Church. See his treatise on "The Church," Book I., Chapters 7, 8, etc.

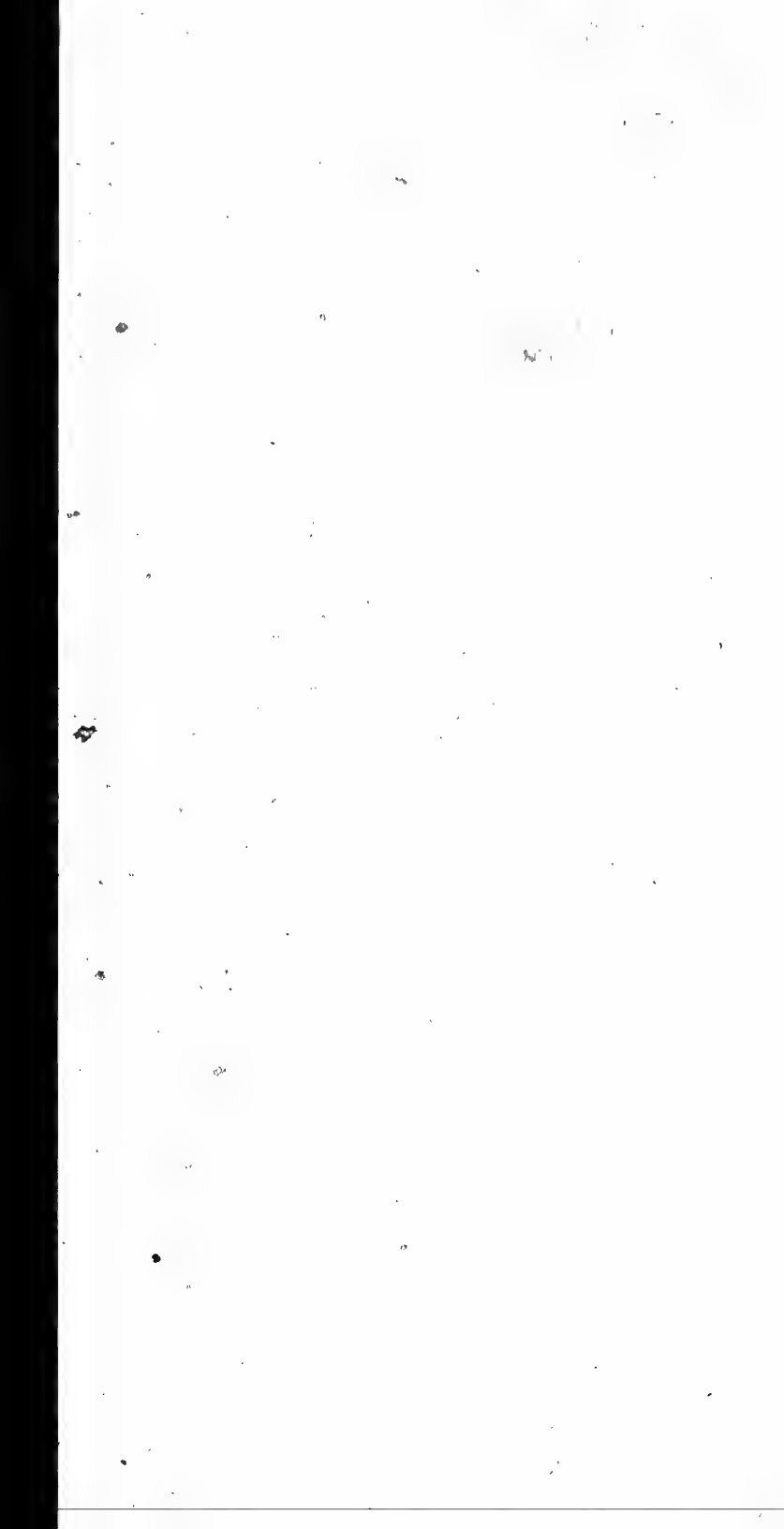
"What is meant here (in the Creed) by the Catholic Church? That whole universal company of the elect that ever were, are, or shall be gathered together in one body, knit together in one faith, under one head, Jesus Christ . . . the multitude of all those that have, do, or shall believe unto the world's end."—*Archbishop Usher's "Body of Divinity."*

"The Catholic Church, in the prime sense, consists only of such men as are actual and indissoluble members of Christ's mystical body, or of such as have the Catholic faith, not only sound in their brains or understandings, but thoroughly rooted in their hearts. . . . The whole company of God's elect actually made members of Christ by virtue of an inward effectual calling to faith and godliness—this we commonly call the invisible Church, or the Church of God's elect. The whole company of all those throughout the world who, by their doctrine and worship, do outwardly make profession of the name of Christ—this we call the universal visible Church, or the Catholic Christian Church."—*Dr. Jackson on the Church.*

"The Church is a company of men and women professing the saving doctrine of Jesus Christ. This is the Church *in sensu forensi*, and in the sight of men ; but because glorious things are spoken of the city of God, the professors

of Christ's doctrine are but imperfectly and inchoatively the Church of God ; but they who are indeed holy and obedient to Christ's laws of faith and manners—these are truly and perfectly 'the Church' . . . these are the Church of God in the eyes and heart of God. For the Church of God is the body of Christ ; but the mere profession of Christianity makes no man a member of Christ—nothing but a new creature, nothing but 'a faith working by love' and keeping the commandments of God. Now, they that do this are not known to be such by men, they are known only to God ; and therefore it is in a true sense the invisible Church. . . . The invisible Church is ordinarily and regularly part of the visible, but yet that only part that is the true one. . . . Now, if any part will agree to call the universality of professors by the title of Church, they may if they will ; but if by a Church we mean that society which is really joined to Christ, which hath received the Holy Ghost, which is heir of the promises and of the good things of God, which is the body of which Christ is the head, then the invisible part of the visible Church, that is, the true servants of Christ, only are the Church."—*Bishop Taylor's "Dissuasive from Popery," Part II., Book 1, Section 1.*

Hooker urges strenuously the importance of the distinction between the Church mystical and visible. "But we speak now of the visible Church, whose children are signed with the mark, 'One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism.' In whomsoever these things are, the Church doth acknowledge them for her children; them only she holdeth for aliens and strangers in whom these things are not found. For want of these things it is that Saracens, Jews, and infidels, are excluded out of the bounds of the Church. Others we may not deny to be of the visible Church, so long as these things are not wanting in them. For apparent it is, that all men are of necessity either Christians or not Christians. If by *external profession* they be Christians, then are they of the



visible Church of Christ; and Christians by external profession they are all whose mark of recognizance hath in it those things which we have mentioned, yea, although they be impious idolaters, wicked heretics, persons excommunicable, yea, and cast out for notorious improbity. Such withal we deny not to be the imps and limbs of Satan, even so long as they continue such. Is it then possible that the self-same men should belong both to the synagogue of Satan and to the Church of Jesus Christ? Unto that Church which is His mystical body, not possible; because that body consisteth of none but only true Israelites, true sons of Abraham, true servants and saints of God. Howbeit, of the visible body and Church of Jesus Christ those may be and often are, in respect of the main parts of their outward profession, who in regard of their inward disposition of mind, yea, of external conversation, yea, even of some parts of their outward profession, are most worthily both hateful in the sight of God Himself, and in the eyes of the sounder part of the visible Church most execrable."—*Hooker, E. P. III., i. 7, 8.*

The following words of Hooker are frequently quoted: "Let us not fear to be herein bold and peremptory, that if anything in the Church's government, surely the first institution of bishops was from heaven, was even of God, the Holy Ghost was the author of it."—*E.P. VII., 5, 10.*

What is involved in them can only be rightly understood when they are placed in connection with the following limitations:

First: Hooker's conception of an ordinance of God as explained in the following: "It (episcopacy) had either Divine appointment beforehand, or Divine approbation afterwards, and is in that respect to be acknowledged the ordinance of God, no less than that ancient Jewish regimen, whereof though Jethro were the adviser, yet after that God had allowed it, all men were subject unto it, as to the polity of God, and not of Jethro."—*E.P. VII., 5, 2.*

Secondly: Hooker's view of the origin of the episcopate, as may be gathered from his statements in the *E.P. VII.*, 11.—too long to quote here. He first followed the view of his great master, Bishop Jewell, that the episcopate arose naturally and without any apostolic sanction out of the presbyterate. Afterwards, he seems to have adopted the opinion that bishops and presbyters were distinct from the outset by apostolic appointment.

Thirdly: Hooker's opinion that it was in the power of the Church to abolish the episcopate. "Bishops, albeit they may assert, with conformity of truth, that their authority hath thus descended from the apostles themselves, yet the absolute and everlasting continuance of it they cannot say that any command of the Lord doth enjoin; and therefore must acknowledge that the Church hath power, by universal consent, upon urgent cause, to take it away. . . . Wherefore, lest bishops forget themselves, as if none on earth had power to touch their states, let them continually bear in mind that it is rather the force of custom whereby the Church, having so long found it good to continue under the requirements of her virtuous bishops, doth still uphold, maintain, and honour them in that respect, than that any such true and heavenly law can be shown, by the evidence whereof it may of a truth appear, that the Lord himself hath appointed presbyters forever to be under the requirements of bishops, in what sort soever they behave themselves. Let this consideration be a bridle unto them; let it teach them not to disdain the advice of their presbyters; but to use their authority with so much greater humility and moderation, as a sword which the Church hath power to take from them."—*E.P. VII.*, 5, 8.

Fourthly: Hooker's view as to the validity of non-episcopal ordinations. He freely allows that the Continental Churches, non-episcopally organized, had a right thus to constitute their polity. "Although," he says, "some

Reformed Churches, the Scottish especially and the French, have not that which best agreeth with Scripture, the government by bishops, I rather lament the defect than exagitate (reproach), since none without fault may be driven to erect that polity which is best." Again he says: "Where the Church must needs have some ordained, and neither hath nor can have possibly a bishop to ordain; in case of such necessity the ordinary institution of God hath given oftentimes, and may give place." Yet again: "Some do infer that no ordination can stand but only such as is made by bishops. . . . To this we answer that there may be sometimes very just and sufficient reasons to allow ordination made without a bishop."—*E.P. VII. xiv., II.*

Fifthly: Hooker expressly asserts the form of Church polity to be a matter of liberty. He insists that all may hold the necessity "of polity and regimen" without holding "one form necessary in all." "Matters of faith," he declares, "necessary to salvation and sacraments, are contained in God's Word. But matters of ceremony, order, Church government, are free, if nothing against them be alleged from Scripture."—*E.P. III., ii., I, 2, etc.*

In corroboration of my representation of Hooker's positions, I will cite three witnesses. The late Bishop Waldegrave, of Carlisle, affirms that Hooker regarded episcopacy as necessary to the *bene esse*, but not to the *esse* of the Church. The writer of the article on Hooker in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* states "Hooker's exact position" to be that "a necessity of polity and regimen may be held in all Churches without holding any form to be necessary." Hallam, in his "Constitutional History," states that Hooker "maintains that no certain form of polity is set down in Scripture as generally indispensable for a Christian Church."

I will also add three testimonies relating not only to

Hooker, but also to the consensus of our Church of England authorities as to this point. Bishop O'Brien, in his charge of 1842 on the Oxford movement, says: "All our great divines who maintain the reality and advantages of a succession from the apostles' time of episcopally-consecrated bishops and episcopally-ordained ministers in the Church, and who rejoice in the possession of it by our own Church, not only did not maintain that this is absolutely essential to the being of the Church, but are at pains to make it clear that they do not hold that it is."

"They (our Reformers) rest the claims of ministers, not on some supposed sacramental virtue, transmitted from hand to hand in unbroken succession from the apostles, in a chain, of which, if any one link be even doubtful, a distressing uncertainty is thrown over all Christian ordinances, sacraments, and Church privileges forever; but on the fact of those ministers being the *regularly-appointed officers of a regular Christian community*."—*Archbishop Whately's "Kingdom of Christ," Essay II.*

The late lamented Dr. Washburn, Rector of Calvary Church, New York, in his "Epochs of Church History" (page 121), says: "There was not one leading divine, from Hooper to Hooker, who ever claimed more than historic and primitive usage as the ground of episcopal authority, or pretended that it was of the essence of the Church. I challenge safely the proofs. . . . Nor only so: no notion of an exclusive episcopacy, even in later times, when Bancroft and Laud had naturalized it, gained footing as a Church principle. Field, Bramhall, Hall, Usher, did not hold it."

From these quotations it is very evident:

1. That our Reformers and divines clearly distinguished between the Church visible and the Church invisible.
2. That they held the essential being of the Church to lie in the invisible realities of Christian life and faith, and not in the external form of Church organization.

3. That they held no particular form of Church government essential to the being of the Church, or absolutely and irrevocably binding upon the Church.

4. That they held episcopacy to be a lawful and scriptural form of Church government, and not an aqueduct and channel of grace.

